



# FACT SHEET

## SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES

Safety or seat belts are "preventive medicine." Buckling up is the single most effective act to protect occupants in the event of a motor vehicle crash. Montana law (MCA 61-13-103 and 61-9-420) places responsibility on the driver to ensure each occupant is properly buckled or in a child safety restraint every trip, every time. Seat belts with airbags and child safety seats provide the following major functions:

- Seat belts help prevent ejection from the vehicle during a crash. The risk of death is **five times greater** if an individual is thrown from the vehicle.
- Seat belts hold the body in the seat during sudden stops and turns, giving the driver better control over the vehicle – airbags alone do not protect occupants.
- Seat belts, in conjunction with airbags, restrain and decelerate the body's movement as the vehicle decelerates, thus minimizing bodily injury.
- Unbuckled bodies can collide at crash force into other passengers in the same vehicle, seriously injuring or even killing them during a crash.
- Seat belt use should become a habit early in life. Parents/caregivers can ensure their children are properly buckled in child safety seats and their teens are buckled safely as drivers and as passengers EVERY TIME.

